

A - not known till 1975 ()
B - " - - (1985 Oct 16)
1987/8?

92? later?

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D = 1.0, not yet measured

E - Received 5 June (continued)

~27-12? Tuesday/ March 28 yes?

What McNamara is still silent or lying about:

Prior to the Cuban Missile Crisis: before October 14, 1962

1. Mongoose: the secret war against Cuba of Pigs; its scale, and the high priority and in particular by RFK, who essentially stimulus to the Soviet deployment.
 2. Actual U.S. intentions with respect to Cuba, after Cuba I: to overthrow the Castro regime.
 3. High-level estimates in the spring of 1962 that U.S. invasion of Cuba would be necessary to accomplish US aims of replacing Castro; proposals and consideration of invasion (though no definite decision or commitment). (Updated contingency plans for invasion from the summer of 1961).

Maneuvers in spring and summer of 1961 both preparing, rehearsing and threatening invasion of Cuba: undoubtedly intending and evidently succeeding in heightening apprehension of possible invasion among Cubans--and, it turns out, Soviets.

 5. Assassination schemes against Castro and other leaders (including his own recommendations for assassination in 1962).

B 6. Provocation proposals, plans, preparations, as part of

Mongoose planning, intended to provoke or to be used to justify direct US intervention. (Mongoose was understood by the Chief of Naval Operations and by Sam Wilson, later head of DIA and then on the cover as staff of such actions primarily intended to provide provocation and excuse).

A (~) ?. Urgent
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possible invasion.

ident and SecDef, in early October
ossible contingencies or justifica rected and monitored ,
have been simulated or stimulated 1962, under a tions
, with a deadline for maximum read (several of
ch could activities) by Mongoose iness of

S 8. Concurrent maneuvers involving a simulated invasion against "Ortsac" (as announced in the press).

6 10 9. Actual deployment and operational status of IRBMs in Turkey in April 1962 (not earlier). (According to Khrushchev, plausibly, and to Burlatsky and others, this **was** a specific stimulus to Khrushchev's decision to move IRBMs to Cuba.)

More generally, none of the Kennedy officials acknowledges (though critics have made the point) that Khrushchev's move was

probably partly stimulated by Kennedy's choices to build gap was

di up

X c strategic forces in 1961 and 1962 even after the missile gap
esw

| is proven in September 1961 (after which McNamara's persistent

| claim that the US buildup was simply a response to exaggerated
| estimates of Soviet forces is clearly false). <L^ js^ & . . , cW

^/^- Nor do they acknowledge the impact of repeated threats of possible US first-use or first-strike made by McNamara and Kennedy in 1961-62 (RFK is also quoted in the WGBH series); or the impact of a decision to expose Soviet strategic nuclear inferiority publicly in Gilpatrick's speech of October, 1961 (which I proposed and drafted).

In other words, just as in their suppression to this date of information about US covert "pressure" on Cuba and plans for direct intervention, these officials fail to acknowledge any responsibility for provoking by US choices —some of them highly questionable, even apart from this possible consequence—in the strategic realm.

t. 10. High-level staffwork on the possible motives and impact of Soviet deployment of MRBMs/IRBMs in Cuba in August and September 1962 (e.g., NSAM on August 23, Harry Rowen memorandum).

'^11. Unprecedented secrecy—culminating in the PSALM clearance-imposed on handling within the intelligence community of evidence relating to "offensive weapons" in Cuba, after Presidential assurances to the public and warnings to the Soviets in September.

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^12. Actual availability of evidence—convincing to some analysts and officials, including Nitze (though not to most, and evidently not brought to the President's attention)—of the presence of Soviet missiles, some days prior to the October 14 U2 flight (forming the basis for its scheduling). Out ! ?

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'^13. The equivocality—and the actual wording—of "assurances" given by Soviets, such as Dobrynin, about the "defensive character" of Soviet military aid to Cuba, in contrast to later charges—as a major justification for US military action—of unequivocal Soviet deceit. (The one clearly-established case of unequivocal deception, from Khrushchev and Mikoyan via Georgi Bolshakov, seems to have arrived at the White House after the missiles had been discovered and US military action had been decided upon)

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During the Missile Crisis: after October 14.

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'C-14. The actual initial reactions of various principals on learning of the presence of the missiles, prior to the first ExComm meeting on the morning of October 16. In particular, Paul Nitze's judgment in the evening of October 15 (having learned of

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the missiles several days earlier) that invasion and airstrike had to be ruled out as too bloody and risky—and that we would just "have to eat them," i.e., reluctantly accept their presence. Dean Rusk, discussing this with Nitze, concurred.

(Nitze, in his interview with Blight and Welch, mentions this discussion but omits to say what his opinion was of possible US responses, or his conclusion; nor are these revealed—indeed, for any of those informed before the meeting—in any other source. Rather, there are frequent false-assertions that no principal, unless possibly Stevenson, seriously entertained even momentarily the thought of making no military response to the Soviet deployment.)

'7 15. Likewise, McNamara's own response, Tuesday morning October 16; that it had been a mistake for the President to make the warning he did on September 13—he had so advised the President—and there would be no crisis if he had not. . . .
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DF2 1-6*. Suggestions by both Taylor—Chairman of the JCS — and McNamara in the ExComm meeting of October 17 (the first with the President not present) that the presence of the missiles might be accepted without any military response, since as McNamara put it, they made no significant difference in the strategic balance, and they constituted no military threat justifying response.

These suggestions—quoted in my transcript of Nitze's unpublished notes of October 17 and never cited in any prior discussion—are in sharp contrast to the general assertions cited above, which have been accepted without question in all existing accounts. Thus, those who did not—contrary to all these accounts—take it for granted without hesitation that an active military response was justified and called for, included the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff: along with the Assistant Secretary Paul Nitze, who along with Chairman Maxwell Taylor was later counted as a principal hawk. Judging by their positions thenceforth, the Deputy Secretaries in both State and Defense, George Ball and Roswell Gilpatric, almost surely were in this camp.

6 (+ Stevenson, Bremer?)

C?17. Repeated discussion by several participants (not only by Stevenson, uniquely "exposed" in this respect by Barlett and Alsop in December 1962), McNamara in particular, prior to the President's speech of October 22nd of the acceptability and probable necessity of a trade of the missiles in Turkey (and possibly other concessions, perhaps including Guantanamo).
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date?

1^l&. Indication by the President on October 20 — as shown in Nitze's notes, but cited by others earlier—that he regarded such a trade as acceptable and even probable—not, as McNamara was still describing it publicly, on the WGBH account shown this year, as "inconceivable"—and that he differed with Stevenson

only on the question of when to mention this negotiation option (not, the President decided, in the speech announcing the blockade, as Stevenson urged, but only after the blockade had been implemented).

2/- It is actually consistent with this--though a very action, if significant reveal confirmed--that in the Moscow meeting s year, on the crisis thi Dobrynin is reported to have asserted in some that RFK himself fashion had introduced the suggestion of the Turkish tradeas a possibility, in meeting with Dobrynin on Tuesday night, October 23: at the least (reports are vague, and s perHaps^Dobrynin' account was, too) RFK said something that led Dobrynin to raisethe possibility in his cable of the meeting to Moscow). (If thisis true, McNamara, and others, might or might not be aware of i t).

19. The possibility that as early as Friday, October 19 (if not earlier) some officials, including McNamara and perhaps the President, had decided fairly strongly against airstrike or invasion at all--given the possibility that some missiles were already operational and might be launched under attack without authorization,

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If this were the case (a possibility never hinted at by any participants prior to 1987, and never made explicit or openly discussed to this day) it would imply that the threats of escalation (beyond tightening of the blockade) implied by military preparations for airstrike and invasion before and after the October 22 speech, discussed repeatedly in the ExComm meetings, and explicitly leaked through various channels, were to a considerable extent or perhaps wholly bluffs, aimed at improving the terms of trade in an eventual bargain and at managing the damaging image of such negotiations domestically.

What is inferred here--based plausibly on new evidence, which is less than conclusive--is a possible secret JFK three-part strategy for getting the Soviet missiles out of Cuba without a hot war (though probably not without significant political cost at home, which the strategy sought to minimize): (1) blockade, possibly progressively expanded; (2) threats (bluffs) of airstrike or invasion, accompanied by large-scale and visible preparations and aggressive reconnaissance; (3) negotiations, in which the US at least removed its missiles in Turkey as part of a deal (preferably proposed by Turkey or NATO, or by the UN). or k
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From this perspective, it would be negotiations, with real concessions by the US (and perhaps NATO!), that would actually get the Soviet missiles out. The prior blockade and threats would set the stage for these negotiations, impressing both the Soviets and the US domestic audience with the Administration's willingness to act boldly and aggressively, taking risks, in order both to get better terms from the Soviets (hopefully,

It 1: *new strategy*
replacing old strategy

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or the ones in Turkey
hobby, UK, "Russia"

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making no concessions on Berlin or Guantanamo, or elsewhere, other than in Turkey), and to make the actual terms palatable at home and in NATO; -- - f~^_ux, v~L--, ^L^ Jc*-^ ^X^, £ »Jbk~n, _ ^

&J.

(No one, neither hawk nor dove, seems real possibility what actually happened: t blockade and threats alone might lead to S missiles, without the need to proceed to a escalation or, as hypothesized here, a publ diplomatic parity. If anything, this surp on the US side than that of the Soviet dep place; nor was it convincingly explained quarter-century, although the core of the apparent in my secret study in 1964. How implications of its being a surprise at th uncomprehended long afterwards, are major study.)

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This hypothesis offers a basis for a relatively low estimate of the risk of war erupting from the confrontation, limiting this risk to the possibility that the process of threatening (bluffing) might have generated pressures, commitments or surprises that got out of the President's control and led to escalations beyond his original intent. But just how small was this residual risk, given what we know now? And how did the President and other advisors see it then? J* «,, A*^. , ^ Aft, v^

If an eventual trade, of at least the Turkish missiles, was

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acceptable and necessary from the beginning, how big a risk of war, and of nuclear war, looked to the President ~~worth~~ taking to improve appearances and the actual bargain? Did the President see this risk realistically; did he take all steps to minimize it? Was he justified, from any of these perspectives?

in Oct
1987

20. The President's clear personal position throughout Saturday, October 27, that the public trade of the missiles, proposed that morning by Khrushchev, was a reasonable and acceptable basis for ending the confrontation. This fact-first disclosed in the November 1987 release of the transcript, and not commented on since by any of the participants-is still flatly, falsely contradicted by McNamara's statement on the WGBH show cited earlier, that Khrushchev's proposed public trade was "inconceivable...inconceivable." (McNamara may have taped this statement before the publication of the transcript, but he knew better, and he could surely have had this falsehood edited out any time prior to the broadcast).

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Thus, it was not inevitable but rather by giving way to his advisors--who did not anticipate the successful outcome the next morning--that the President chose to prolong the crisis by another 24 hours: during which US recon planes were being shot at, with the constant possibility of loss of control over events.

2V 21. Almost alone, McNamara deprecates the straightforward interpretations of RFK's messages to Dobrynin on the night of October 27 as constituting either an ultimatum, on the one hand, or (f% secret trade of missiles, on the other. He cannot believe that RFK went beyond the terms of the small-group discussion before he met with Dobrynin, which he says did not include either a deadline or a definite threat of airstrike or invasion; nor does he see the assurance that the missiles would be removed from Turkey as a trade, but only as a description of a unilateral US policy: ignoring that no prior decision had been made by the President, and that RFK's assurance was conditional on the crisis having been settled satisfactorily.

1987? The latter position by McNamara seems simply to be his continuation of the official cover story of 1962. The former skepticism may reflect his own position then of extreme reluctance to see such a threat carried out in 48 hours, or ever, and his belief the President felt the same way; this is consistent with the hypothesis mentioned in 19 above. Either the President or RFK might have decided, after the small-group discussion in which McNamara participated, to go beyond its terms in threatening; but consistent with McNamara's belief, the President—with or without RFK in agreement, or even knowing his mind--might have seen this explicit secret ultimatum as a bluff. *McN can't believe that? or say it?*

McNamara's positions raise the question what he thinks did bring Khrushchev's sudden concession on Sunday morning, without the public trade of the Turkish missiles and without any time pressure on the Soviets in the form of an ultimatum?

27.22. The absence from ExComm thinking on Saturday, Oct. 27, of the possibility that Khrushchev had not ordered the firing of the SAM that destroyed our U-2, nor authorized Castro's firing on US low-level recon planes: both confirmed by the Soviets in 1987 and 1989.

In general, while expressing concern about possible loss of control, McNamara never gives any specifics about how this might have happened (other than possible launching of a Soviet nuclear missile by a low-level officer without authorization, under attack). It is not clear that he has yet realized how close such an escalation—undesired by him and the President--may have come, by the interaction of firing by Cubans and Soviets uncontrolled by the Kremlin and a specific ultimatum by RFK—relaying a commitment by the President and ExComm—on US response to a shootdown.

AHA H5B ,23. The urgency and the meaning (problematic) of efforts on the afternoon and evening of October 27 to "defuse" (or remove warheads from) IRBMs in Turkey (to my dismay, at the time).

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29. When do we need

30. Lessons for VN:

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